

R E M A R K S

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed May 18, 2006, prior to preparing this response. Currently claims 1-22 are pending in the application after entry of this amendment. Applicant respectfully traverses each of the rejections formulated in the Office Action. Favorable consideration of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 15-19 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Merdan et al., U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0004061, in view of Yamazaki et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,856,649.

Merdan et al disclose a laser jet mechanism for cutting tubes to form among other things stents. Yamazaki et al. disclose laser cutting a running piercing prior to through cutting. Merdan et al. and Yamazaki et al. do not appear to disclose hybrid liquid-jet/laser cutting of a material by first cutting an interior portion within an interior zone. Claim 1 as amended recites removing an interior zone from an interior portion using a hybrid liquid-jet/laser and then removing the remainder of the material from the interior zone. Claim 17 has also been amended to recite similar elements. By first removing an interior portion from the interior zone an edge is created with the remainder of the interior portion allowing it to be more readily removed.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 17 are in condition for allowance. Claims 2-16 and 18-22 depend from claims 1 and 17 respectfully. For the reasons given above and because these claims recite additional significant limitations, applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. It is submitted that all pending claims are currently in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is anticipated. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at 612.677.9050.

Respectfully submitted,

STEVEN J. KOCH

By his Attorney,

Date: November 20, 2006 _____ /glenn m. seager/ _____

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